



UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC, AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION (UNESCO) Background Guide 2015

Committee History

UNESCO was originally conceived during World War Two at the Conference of Allied Ministers of Education (CAME) in 1942. The original aim of the Conference was to devise a plan to reconstruct the systems of education of the Allied European countries once peace was restored. The project quickly gained momentum and eventually came to include new functions and new governments. Since the establishment of UNESCO in 1945, the committee has been based in Paris, France. With over 50 offices worldwide, it is charged with the mission of promoting peace, social justice, human rights and international security through cooperation on educational, science and cultural programs.

UNESCO has two governing bodies, the General Conference and the Executive Board. The General Conference meets every two years and consists of the member states of UNESCO. Note that the representative states of UNESCO differ from those of the UN General Assembly, although there is understandably a very large amount of overlap. The Executive Board carries out tasks as directed by the General Conference, and consists of a very diverse group of people from around the world who have dedicated their lives to UNESCO's various missions (UNESCO).

The official slogan of UNESCO is "Building peace in the minds of men and women" (UNESCO). In keeping with this mission, UNESCO operates under a set of themes in its activities. Some of the seven total themes, and the ones this simulation will focus on, include "Education for the 21st Century", "Protecting our Heritage and Fostering Creativity", and "Building Knowledge Societies" (UNESCO). UNESCO has a very wide range of activities, all of which converge on the common goal of making the world smaller and safer for the next generation. These goals make UNESCO one of the largest and most active international organizations in the world.

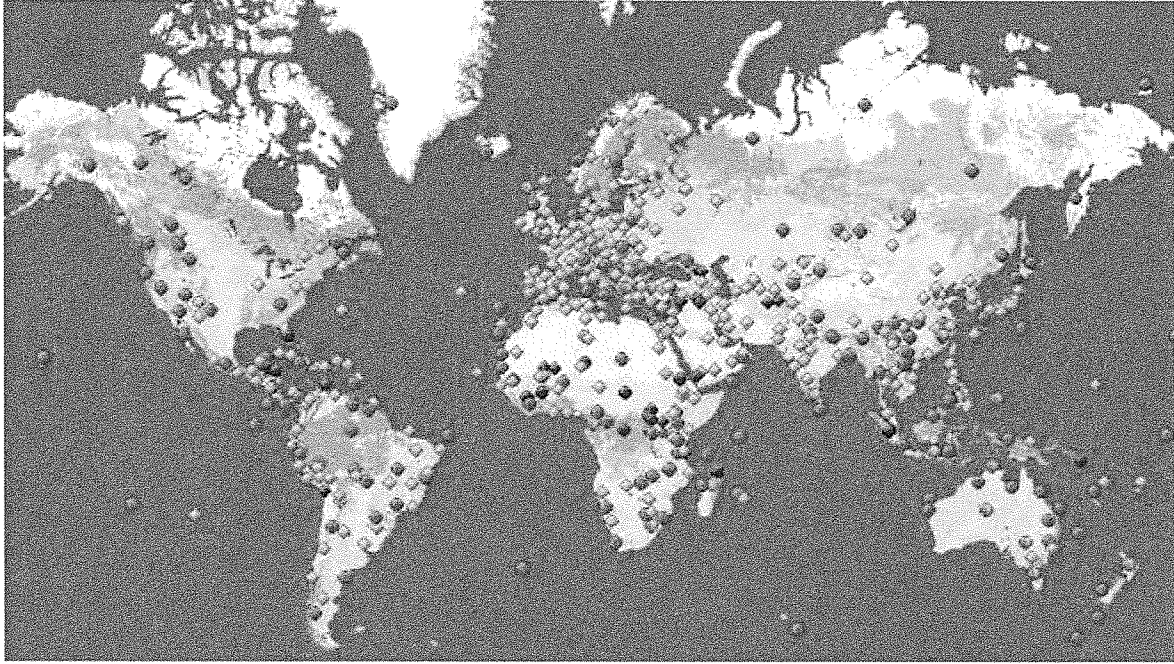
Committee Simulation

This simulation is designed to represent reality as best as possible within the confines of the committee room. Model UN simulations and other conferences delegates might attend in the future are based on Parliamentary Procedure, just as are actual UN and other governmental meetings across the democratic world. Delegates are expected to actively participate in debate, negotiate with others, and contribute to resolutions that are passed. Most importantly, delegates are expected to align with their respective nation's policies and politics throughout the simulation. The goal of this UNESCO committee is to pass at least one resolution on each of the two topics described in this background guide.

Delegates should extensively research their party's positions on each topic, as well as the history of each topic. The background guide is meant to serve as an introduction as well as give delegates direction in their research. The Dais, which consists of the Director and Administrative Directors, will be looking for delegates who are very knowledgeable in the topic, their country's position, and who use strategy and effective communication to spread their ideas to the rest of the committee. That being said, delegates are not allowed to use electronic devices in the committee room or while committee is in session. All research must be done before the session begins. A delegate who would like to reference their research and notes must have it available in a hard copy form

I. Protecting Cultural Heritage Sites in War Zones

Introduction



Locations of current UNESCO World Heritage Sites: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/>

Heritage is our legacy from the past, what we live with today, and what we pass on to future generations. Our cultural and natural heritage are both irreplaceable sources of life and inspiration. Places as unique and diverse as the wilds of East Africa's Serengeti, the Pyramids of Egypt, the Great Barrier Reef in Australia and the Baroque cathedrals of Latin America make up our world's heritage. What makes the concept of World Heritage exceptional is its universal application. World Heritage sites belong to all the peoples of the world, irrespective of the territory on which they are located (UNESCO).

World heritage Sites (WHS) are natural or cultural areas distinguished by UNESCO as being of utmost importance or significance to the global community and therefore in need of protection and preservation for future generations (UNESCO, Meskell 483). There are currently 981 WHS spread among the 160 States Parties to The Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (World Heritage Convention) (UNESCO). The World Heritage

Convention in 1972 established the official documentation of WHS, criteria for addition to the list of WHS and guidelines for how World Heritage Fund money should be utilized. The selection criteria for inclusion in the WHS list is as follows:

- i. to represent a masterpiece of human creative genius;
- ii. to exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town- planning or landscape design;
- iii. to bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared;
- iv. to be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history;
- v. to be an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement, land-use, or sea-use which is representative of a culture (or cultures), or human interaction with the environment especially when it has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change;
- vi. to be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance. (The Committee considers that this criterion should preferably be used in conjunction with other criteria);
- vii. to contain superlative natural phenomena or areas of exceptional natural beauty and aesthetic importance;
- viii. to be outstanding examples representing major stages of earth's history, including the record of life, significant on-going geological processes in the development of landforms, or significant geomorphic or physiographic features;

- ix. to be outstanding examples representing significant on-going ecological and biological processes in the evolution and development of terrestrial, fresh water, coastal and marine ecosystems and communities of plants and animals;
- x. to contain the most important and significant natural habitats for in-situ conservation of biological diversity, including those containing threatened species of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science or conservation.

The protection, management, authenticity and integrity of properties are also important considerations. Since 1992 significant interactions between people and the natural environment have been recognized as cultural landscapes (UNESCO).

Today, some of these eternally important sites across the world are being threatened on a daily basis by political violence and armed conflict. The task of our committee will be to build upon previously existing methods of protecting WHS and develop new methods to replace those that have failed thus far. Extensive research should be done with a particular focus on the Middle East region, where WHS have been threatened and/or destroyed most recently.

History and Description of the Issue

In 1899 and again in 1907, international peace conventions were held at The Hague in the Netherlands. Along with the Geneva Conventions, the Hague Conventions were among the first formal statements of the laws of war and war crimes in the body of secular international law (Avalon Project). The two conventions, along with the Roerich Pact of 1935 set the basis which would eventually guide the United Nations in its endeavor to establish a method for the protection of cultural property during armed conflict (UNESCO) Article 27 of the 1907 Hague Convention states how this would happen:

In sieges and bombardments all necessary steps must be taken to spare, as far as possible, buildings dedicated to religion, art, science, or charitable purposes, historic monuments, hospitals, and places where the sick and wounded are collected, provided they are not being used at the time for military purposes. It is the duty of the besieged to indicate the presence of such buildings or places by distinctive and visible signs, which shall be notified to the enemy beforehand (International Committee of the Red Cross).

The Convention generally worked during the First World War, but this can be mostly attributed to the lack of movement along the Front Line throughout most of the war. During the Second World War however, bombing campaigns indiscriminately destroyed structures that had previously stood for hundreds of years in major cities across Britain and Central and Eastern Europe. Cities including London and Berlin were almost totally destroyed. In Japan, entire cities were levelled, leaving none of their thousands of years-old history behind (UNESCO). The 1954 Convention would later be passed to specifically address the need to protect any surviving structures. The Convention mentions the Second World War by name as an event during which most European cultural sites were destroyed (UNESCO). Just one example is St Peter's Church in Bristol, UK, included structures which dated back to the 12th century AD, but was destroyed by the Bristol Blitz in 1940. While houses of worship were generally avoided by bombers, the bombing methods used at the time were very inaccurate. At times a bomb may miss an intended military target and explode on ancient civilian structures. At other times, bombing campaigns were indiscriminate, although special care was often taken to avoid churches when they could be identified. Without any standardized method of identifying and protecting WHS, no individual structure could be guaranteed safety.

The widespread destruction of cultural heritage during the war led to UNESCO taking on the task of figuring out how to protect heritage sites for future generations. The first United Nations document that addressed the threat to cultural sites during times of armed conflict was on May 14, 1954, when the first protocol of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict was signed. It sought primarily to provide a practical solution that could theoretically be utilized in the event of another destructive war. 126 countries are party to the treaty, while 4 more have signed but not ratified: Andorra, Ireland, Philippines and the UK (UNESCO).

The convention outlines a method in which cultural property is labeled with a special emblem that can be easily recognized by both defender and occupier in any conflict,

The distinctive emblem of the Convention shall take the form of a shield, pointed below, persaltire blue and white (a shield consisting of a royal-blue square, one of the angles of which forms the point of the shield, and of a royal-blue triangle above the square, the space on either side being taken up by a white triangle). (UNESCO).

Any property bearing this emblem should be protected from pillaging and theft, and should not be used as a defensive barrier in battle. In special circumstances, refugees may use the marked sites as shelter, since the safety of the sites are assumed. The Convention also established an international registry by which heritages sites could be pre-marked for protection. Moveable items within the sites can also be registered, and aggressors in a conflict must facilitate the transportation of any such objects to a location where it will be removed from any harm associated with the armed conflict. Such objects are also immune from seizure or capture as spoils of war ('looting'), and as a result remain the property of the proper governing authority. If land is captured by another country, the sites rightfully become that country's property, at which time it becomes their responsibility to care for the preservation of the area.

In Paris on November 16, 1972, the General Conference of UNESCO adopted a resolution drafted by the World Heritage Committee at the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage. The treaty established the World Heritage Site (WHS) list that is commonly referred to today. Unlike the 1954 convention, this treaty focuses more on each individual nation's protection of property within their borders. The treaty defines the parameters by which WHS should be defined. From there it is up to each country to decide for which sites to submit applications for WHS status. The World Heritage Committee (WHC) was set up under this treaty to review applications and maintain a list of WHS.

Article 11 of this resolution allows the WHC to maintain a separate list of "World Heritage in Danger" for Sites that are threatened with severe deterioration or destruction (UNESCO). The first site to be added to this list was the "Old City of Jerusalem and its Walls" in 1982, and it remains on the list to this day. Since countries must apply for sites to be added to the list, not all sites that have historic cultural value are on the list.

The 1972 treaty has certain flaws. First, the WHC does not maintain a list of unofficial WHS, that is, sites that it feels should be on the list, but for which the country controlling the territory it stands on has not submitted an application. As a result, an unknown number of ancient structures and natural sites receive neither widespread attention nor protection, and when they do, little can be done by the international community. The Buddhas of Bamiyan in Afghanistan serve as a prime example of the grave importance of protecting cultural heritage. Composed of two huge statues which are carved into the Bamiyan mountains, they were destroyed in 2001 by the Taliban government then ruling the country (UNESCO). The location was not declared an official Heritage site until 2003. Leading up to the demolition, virtually every UNESCO GA member condemned the plan.

The Taliban carried out this demolition for religious reasons. Islam bans worship of idols.

The Taliban take on an extremely strict interpretation of Sharia Law, which compelled the organization to condemn the statues. This went ahead despite fierce opposition by the rest of the Muslim world, who claimed that since the region was completely devoid of worshippers of the Buddhist religion, the statues were not idols but rather relics, so demolition was both unnecessary and destructive. Even though the Taliban was an internationally recognized terrorist organization and its government was almost unanimously considered illegitimate by the international community, no direct action on the part of the international community was taken to protect the statues.

The destruction of the Buddhas represented a catastrophic failure on the part of the international community, which unanimously opposed the action, from stopping it. It also proved to the world that not all countries can be trusted to protect their own heritage sites. The intended purpose of protecting cultural heritage according to the WHC is to preserve them for future generations.

One of the ongoing problems is that countries are not registering their cultural sites, and therefore they are not being protected. The Bamiyan site in Afghanistan became an official WHS in 2003, two full years after their destruction. In 2002, the Ajayad Fortress, a 17th century Ottoman relic just feet away from the Masjid al Haram, was destroyed to make way for the Mecca Royal Hotel Clock Tower. Many more historical sites stand today that are unregistered and thus face grave threats, especially during conflict. One of the questions to consider is how countries can be encouraged to register their cultural heritage sites, so that current methods can be utilized to protect them. Considering the threats to sites today, it should also be considered what new methods could be employed.

Current Status

The wars in Afghanistan and Iraq waged by the United States and NATO forces have resulted in insurmountable destruction of cultural property during and in their aftermath. The shock from such destruction has rippled through the international community as well as the archaeological community, who despair over the destruction of sites which had not been fully explored (Rowlands and Butler).

At the end of 2013, there were 44 listed Heritage sites in danger. Eight of these sites were added during the year 2013, and six of those eight are in the Syrian Arab Republic. The territory on which the modern state of Syria is located is home to remains of some of the world's first civilizations that developed along the Tigris and Euphrates rivers as early as 4000 BCE. Among these sites are the Ancient city of Aleppo, which has been a major site of conflict as a rebel stronghold. The modern city has been nearly obliterated, and many ancient structures have been damaged. Every day, additional bombing campaigns by the Syrian Army threaten the total destruction of these WHS. Generally, the existing methods of marking WHS has been ignored. UNESCO has sent emergency observers to assess the current damage and help to prevent further damage.

One example of destruction that has already occurred in Syria is in the ancient Umayyad Mosque, where some of the earliest protests against the Assad Regime occurred in 2011.



First image: Mosque interior before 2011

Source: <http://risalafurniture.ae/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/Umayyad-mosque-carpet.jpg>

Second image: Mosque following Assad bombing campaign in 2012.

Source: <http://informationng.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/Umayyad-mosque-destroyed.jpg>

The International community has thus far its back on the cultural heritage sites, and has chosen not to directly intervene in the Syria conflict. Votes in Britain and the USA to take direct military action have failed, and China and Russia have continually supported the opposing side to other western powers. Arms are being continually sold to both the Assad regime and to various rebel factions (The Guardian). With politics getting in the way, the protection of cultural sites has unfortunately been thrown by the wayside. However, the threatened cultural heritage across the Middle East has always been of concern to all parties.

Other factors have limited action towards protecting WHS in recent years. In wake of the recent economic crisis,

UNESCO moved swiftly to launch a global media response to the US withdrawal [of funding]. Director-General Bokova (2011) claimed that the “withholding of U.S. dues and other financial contributions— required by U.S. law—will weaken UNESCO’s effectiveness and undermine its ability to build free and open societies (Meskell 490).

When the U.S. invaded Iraq in 2003, the military acquired a multitude of portable items of importance to cultural heritage that the Hussein regime’s intelligence agency had collected and stored for many years, and promptly had them transported to the mainland U.S. for protection purposes. The significance of this find was that some of the artifacts included Jewish manuscripts. Hussein was a publicly known enemy of Israel and of the Jewish people. Although the artifacts were kept in sub-standard conditions, the fact that the regime was interested in holding on to them rather than destroying them is significant in that it shows that few regimes in recent history have tended to actively seek to destroy cultural heritage (Al-Monitor). As in the case of Syria where rebels sometimes use ancient structures as defensive positions, sometimes conflict makes damage to

cultural sites nearly impossible to avoid. In the past year, the United States has agreed to return the collection to Iraq, whose government has promised to take better care of its preservation (Haaretz).

China, a country that has actively destroyed its cultural heritage, including relocating ancient communities into major cities to construct the Three Gorges Dam, has also been partial to protecting the core of its cultural heritage. In response Taliban's destruction of the Buddhas of Bamiyan, China, which has been ruled by the atheist Communist Party since 1948, announced the construction of the Spring Temple Buddha (Indiatimes). Completed in 2002 at a total cost of \$55 million USD, the statue is the tallest in the world, and contains a massive Buddhist monastery beneath it which is in active use today (BBC).

When researching bloc positions, do not focus on whether or not countries are interested in protecting cultural heritage, whether their own or another country's. Instead, look into the cultural interests of those countries. Saudi Arabia, for example, destroyed multiple buildings, including some mosques, that are directly connected to the prophet Mohammed, but they did so in order to expand the Masjid Al-Haram to accommodate more worshippers so that all Muslims would have greater opportunity to worship at Islam's holiest and most ancient site. The Taliban government received fierce and unanimous opposition from the entire international community, but no country was willing to put their own soldiers' lives on the line to overthrow a radical government, especially in a country that has been dubbed the site of the Soviet Union's Vietnam, and where thousands of U.S. and international soldiers have lost their lives since.

Committee Mission and Questions to Consider

This committee has been tasked with constructing a method to protect cultural heritage sites in conflict zones, with debate centering specifically around those in the Middle East region, although any resolution passed should generally address sites across the world.

those sites that are being threatened by current conflicts. Debate topics may include motivation for destruction, perils involved in protecting cultural heritage.

1. What new passive or active methods can be employed to mark heritage sites and ensure their protection?
2. What level of obligation does the international community have to protect the heritage sites of other countries?
3. Should the lives of international forces be put at risk to protect cultural heritage sites?
4. How can religiously motivated destruction of Heritage sites be stopped?

II. The Effects of Economic Sanctions on the Education and Scientific Progress of Nations

Introduction

For a long time, it has been commonly believed that sanctions were a humane alternative to war. Without needless slaughter or collateral damage, Sanctions were thought of the best peaceful diplomatic alternative to war. More recently, however, scholars have begun debating whether sanctions have been effective for their stated purpose, and if the usefulness of sanctions as a means of diplomatic compulsion on a state outweighs the humanitarian effects on the affected state's citizens. The debate often focuses on health and living conditions. In North Korea, food aid has sometimes been withheld by many countries as a means to put an end to the country's nuclear program. Since this country is also prone to flood-induced famines, the results